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DE RUEHMS #0120 0411311  
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INFO RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/RA, OES/PCI  
STATE PASS TO CDC/ATLANTA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [KFLU](#) [PREL](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: MINISTRY REAFFIRMS OMAN AS AVIAN INFLUENZA-FREE

¶1. (U) On January 29, Amman ESTH Regional Officer and POLE Assistant received an update on Oman's surveillance and detection of avian influenza (AI) from Dr. Salah al-Awaidy, Director of the Department of Communicable Diseases Surveillance and Control (DCDSC), Ministry of Health. Awaidy stressed that Oman has had no animal or human avian influenza cases to date. Nonetheless, he added that Oman takes the AI threat seriously, given recent cases in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and India, as well as the seasonal migration of birds through Oman. He explained that a national preparedness plan has been completed and tested through several tabletop exercises. Oman does not undertake any regular sampling and testing procedures unless AI outbreak indicators are detected. Awaidy noted that through Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) coordination mechanisms, he receives good updates from Saudi Arabia in its dealings with recent AI cases. (Note: Awaidy remarked that most chicken sold in Oman originates from Saudi Arabia and praised Saudi Arabia's commercial poultry farms, calling them a "real business," with poultry given five-star treatment. End Note.)

¶2. (U) Awaidy praised DSDSC's excellent cooperation with the Naval Medical Research Unit (NAMRU-3) in Cairo, characterizing his last seven years of cooperation with NAMRU as a solid partnership. He recounted that NAMRU has helped Oman in infectious disease control management plans, pneumonia prevention protocols, provision of laboratory equipment, and reviews of Oman's AI surveillance system.

¶3. (SBU) Awaidy remains concerned about Oman's exposure to recent Rift Valley fever cases reported in Kenya and Somalia, noting that animals from Africa frequently enter Oman. While Oman monitors all animals entering the country, given the sometimes porous borders with the UAE and Yemen, the government often has to resort to the "rumor notification" system to undertake sampling and testing in specific areas.  
GRAPPO